

# THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.

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VOL. I.

## RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

A VERY happy illustration of christian fellowship was exhibited in Belfast, on the 1st Monday of the past month, by the union of ministers and their people, of three different denominations, in complying with an invitation from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, to observe the day in fasting and prayer, "for the Divine blessing on the ministry of the gospel, throughout the world; for the revival of religion in the whole of Christendom; for the entire success of those benevolent enterprises which have for their object the world's conversion to God." Divine service was performed in a Meeting-house of each of the denominations by the following ministers, who have thus set an example of christian unanimity and love, which, with our whole hearts, we wish to see continued and extended. The Rev. Drs. Hanna and Bryce, Messrs. Morgan, Bellis, Carlisle, Wilson, Edgar. The following is an extract from an address delivered by Mr. Edgar on the occasion.

The invitation of our American brethren, by which we are assembled, addressed as it is to christians of the whole world, is worthy of a great church, in that very great nation, which is exalted in righteousness, and distinguished for all that is enlightened and extended in christian enterprise. The christian love of our American brethren knows no limits but the limits of the world. These are the men who, with others, resolved at the meeting of their Bible Society, that in two years every family in the United States should have a bible, and who set the powers of the steam engine to work, in printing bibles for accomplishing their heavenly purpose. These are the men whose missionaries are now traversing all parts of the globe, and whose example in all that is noble and good, an admiring world is imitating. They are praying for us now; and though the broad Atlantic rolls between them and us, their hearts are with us. As brethren and fellow-christians, they invite us to unite with them in the noblest work that can engage the affec-

tions and the energies of man. Most cheerfully do we accept an invitation, proffered with such cordiality, and so much in the spirit of that religion, which says to every man, Come—and bids every man say to his neighbour, and him again to another beyond him, Come.

To-night is our night of prayer—to-morrow, and every day, will be our days of anxious, and laborious, and persevering exertion, for the fulfilment of our prayers.

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We pray for a blessing on the ministry of the Gospel, knowing it to be the great instrument for promoting a revival of religion, and the entire success of those benevolent enterprises which have for their object the world's conversion to God.

The revivals of religion in America are daily becoming subjects of more intense interest. I am supported by incontrovertible authority, in stating, that during the year 1831, sixty-eight Presbyteries, including seven hundred congregations of the General Assembly, were blessed with the special influences of the Holy Spirit, reviving the churches, and bringing perishing sinners to the knowledge of the truth. Other sections of the religious community have been visited in like manner. Probably not less than two thousand congregations have experienced, during the year, reviving influences; and about a hundred thousand souls, out of a population of thirteen millions, have, there is good reason to believe, been converted to God.

If any are incredulous respecting the existence of these revivals, I beg to offer the evidence which has satisfied my own mind. I have read the work of Rev. Calvin Colton, on American Revivals, an American Clergyman, who has preached in England, and published his work there; and so much honesty, sincerity, and sound philosophy, are displayed in it, that I cannot conceive how any unprejudiced mind could resist its evidence. I have read the work of Dr. Sprague, on Revivals, evidently the production of a most ingenuous, sound, and cautious mind; and he has brought forward in it, the testimonies of about twenty most distinguished American Clergymen, of six religious denominations. From some of those who have been most active in promoting revivals have I received accounts exactly similar to those which Dr. Sprague and others have published; and, in a word, I have the evidence, not only of the whole General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and of different other bodies, but of nearly all the American Religious Newspapers and Periodicals which have fallen into my hands.

But while you all grant that revivals have taken place very extensively in America, some perhaps are prejudiced against them, having heard that they consist of mere animal excitement—ebullitions of heated feeling. That mere animal excitement has, in America, as well as in our own country, obtained the name of religious revivals, may readily be granted; nor is it denied, that in real revivals, ignorance and wild enthusiasm have been displayed. These, however, were mere abuses connected with revivals, not revivals themselves; and we have no more warrant to condemn them on that account, than to condemn christianity because our christian forefathers considered themselves warranted to burn women for witchcraft.

Let us, however, look closely at a reputed illustration of enthusiasm which has afforded pretext for much calumny against revivals. It has been the practice with ministers, when a strong impression had been produced on a congregation, to invite those who felt deeply anxious for the salvation of their souls to separate themselves from the assembly, to become the subjects of special address and prayer. Now, without defending or condemning such a practice, it is enough to observe, that a similar separation is practised at the sacrament, by all christian congregations, and in some among ourselves, where young communicants publicly profess their faith, and are made the subjects of separate address, of christian sympathy and prayer.

But, granting that the inviting of the seriously impressed to what are called “anxious seats,” is a dangerous experiment, would it not be most unjust and absurd to argue, that because this experiment has sometimes been made, and failed in revivals, therefore they are mere fanaticism, and their promoters weaklings, influenced by animal excitement. About the greatest men we find much of the littleness of humanity; and intermixed with the greatest works even of man’s intellectual and moral enterprise, is no small share of human folly and weakness.

A view of the nature of religious revivals will commend them to your cordial approbation and your prayers.

“The theory of revivals,” says one of the ornaments of our day, “is very simple. It is only the increase and extension to a number of sinners, at the same time, of that influence of the Holy Spirit which is employed in the conversion of each individual sinner that is brought to repentance. There is surely nothing fanatical, nothing incredible here. Instead of no conversions taking place, as is, alas! too frequent in congregations;

or instead of one or two persons now and then being induced to give themselves to the Saviour, there is, in revivals, a general awakening of deep interest in the concerns of eternity throughout a congregation or a whole district; many of the unconverted are inquiring, with intense anxiety, what must we do to be saved? and among the converted there are exhibited unwonted zeal, activity, and christian love. I ask again, is there any thing fanatical or incredible in all this—incredible, I say, to those christians who pray for great things, and expect great things,—that by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit there should be, through the instrumentality of human means, a great increase of zeal and devotedness in God's people, an alarm and conviction on many formerly careless, and a profession, by considerable numbers, of having embraced Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

Now this is exactly what in America and other parts has been called religious revivals.

“Of what,” says the Rev. Mr. James, of Birmingham, “have we been assured, on the most unquestionable evidence? Of whole congregations, bowed at the same moment, beneath the mighty power of divine truth, looking, as with a single eye, on the realities of eternity, and feeling, as with a common emotion, the powers of the world to come; so that a thoughtless stranger, coming into the assembly, is made to feel, as if by passing over the threshold of the house, he had passed the boundary line between things seen and temporal, and things unseen and eternal; and where, though surrounded by thronging multitudes, he seems to be left alone with God and his conscience—of scenes where hundreds of heart-stricken, anxious inquirers after salvation, just awakened from the long deep slumber of an unregenerate state, and musing thoughts too deep for utterance, were asking by their looks, rather than by their words, what they should do to be saved—of whole churches blending their common and fervent supplications at the footstool of the divine throne, with such oneness of intense desire as caused them to feel that there was scarcely a single object in the universe to be coveted or thought of at that moment but the salvation of souls—of colleges of learning, where the purposes of literature were almost suspended for a season by a still deeper solicitude to become wise unto salvation—of towns so filled with the power of divine truth that all the adult population have yielded to its influence, and turned to the Lord—of christian churches, increased in a single year to an unwonted magnitude by the accession of

hundreds to their communion; yes, of all these facts do the accounts from the United States assure us as occurring there."

In the midst of these astonishing changes, it is an undeniable fact, that, though in some instances there were exhibitions of ignorance and enthusiasm, yet this great work of grace is calm and steady; the public meetings held, whether for preaching or prayer, are distinguished by a deep and awfully impressive silence and solemnity; and though there is certainly strong excitement, and why should there not, it is not a mere fever of the mind, or electrical convulsion of the body, but a genuine spiritual excitement, arising from the influence of truth upon the heart, and its awakening up within, the fires of spiritual life.

The means employed for obtaining and promoting revivals have also been such as the most fastidious must acknowledge to be rational and scriptural. The preaching of the Gospel is the greatest and most effectual; and this preaching has no inflammatory character, makes no appeal merely to feeling, and contains nothing calculated to produce mere temporary ferment. I know some of the men who have been chiefly honoured by God in religious revivals. I have heard them preach, and taken part with them in public meetings, and their whole manner seemed to me the very antipodes to extravagance. They were prudent, firm, collected, and cautious; they were grave, they were devoted, and all that they said and did made a deep impression that they were in earnest. What seemed especially to distinguish their preaching was, that by plain and pointed addresses to the understanding and conscience, they left each individual of their audience, without subterfuge, to determine *now* either to come to Christ and be saved, or to continue in sin and be lost. Other means which have been chiefly effectual have been prayer and visitation from house to house, the establishment of temperance societies and of Bible classes.

Social prayer-meetings have been greatly blessed; a considerable proportion of converts have been educated in Bible classes; and it is an acknowledged truth throughout the whole of that glorious body of American christians, by whose invitation we assemble here, as well as among tens of thousands more, that no extensive prosperity needs ever be expected by the church so long as professing christians continue to pour upon their souls those poisonous spirituous liquors, which the late Rev. Robert Hall so truly described as "liquid death and distilled damnation."

Let us now glance at the fruits of revivals, for by these we shall know them. It is a hundred years since the religious revival, recorded by Jonathan Edwards, took place in America; and revivals have been continued there with more or less frequency and effect to the present day. Revivals took place in the days of Whitfield, Baxter, John Brown, Romaine, and others. Without discussing these, it is sufficient at present to observe, that modern American revivals have continued so long, (about 40 years) as to enable the world to judge accurately of their fruits.

Hear, then, one or two specimens of evidence from an immense mass. "It is my sober judgment," says the excellent Dr. Hawes, "that if there is, among the people of my charge, any cordial belief and love of the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel—any serious practical regard to the duties of the christian life—any self-denial—any bearing of the cross, and following Christ, according to his commands—any active benevolence and engagedness in doing good—in short, any pious efficient concern for the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners, either at home or abroad, in christian or in heathen lands, all this is to be traced in no small part to the influence of revivals of religion, and is to be found, in an eminent degree, among those who have been added to the church as fruits of revivals."

"In conclusion," says Dr. Hyde, "I feel a pleasure in saying that the church," (one remarkably blessed by revivals,) "have manifested a commendable zeal and liberality in supporting the various charitable institutions of the day, and in promoting the cause of temperance, which, for a few years past, has been regarded as a subject of the deepest interest to the cause of the Redeemer, and to our country."

I shall produce only one other testimony, and it is taken from Dr. Sprague's work on revivals, very lately published. "I hardly need say," (says Dr. Sprague,) "that all our great benevolent institutions—our Missionary, and Bible, and Tract, and Education, and Temperance, and all kindred societies, have flourished most where the influences of God's grace have been most abundantly experienced; and I am sure that every thing in the aspect of Providence indicates that the spirit of revivals, and the spirit of public charity, are hereafter to go hand in hand, the one being sustained and cherished in a great degree by the other, till the earth shall be filled with the Redeemer's glory."

It now having been established, that genuine religious

revivals have taken place to an astonishing extent, that they have been productive of incalculable good, and that they have been effected by God's grace, through human instrumentality, it becomes a subject of solemn inquiry—shall these blessings be confined to America—has our own sinful inactivity kept them away from us—and are there means which we now can and will employ, in dependence on divine grace, for making the spiritual wilderness of our own land to bloom and blossom as the rose? On this subject let the dispassionate judgment of every individual decide.

If, christian brethren, we wish the universal extension of the Gospel, and the entire success of christian institutions, extensive reform must take place both among ministers and people.

1. There is something radically wrong in the mode of supplying a large portion of the pulpits of our country. Instead of candidates coming to the solemn work of the ministry, prompted by the deliberate choice of their own matured minds, boys are sent to school to prepare them for being made ministers; they are transmitted to college, still farther to prepare them for being made ministers; and it is not till perhaps they are almost at the door of the pulpit that the question is put to them—is it a desire for promoting the salvation of souls, and not any worldly designs or motives, that has induced them to choose the office of the ministry? Is it by such a preparation, brethren, that we can expect to find our pulpits filled, as they ought to be, with God-fearing men? No. The men who may be expected to become agents in revivals are those who have voluntarily chosen the solemn and responsible office from an earnest desire of glorifying God, and doing good to men.

2. The American churches are greatly superior to ours in purity of church communion, without which there can be no extensive prosperity in any church. Promiscuous communion is not only a violation of the rules of Jesus Christ for the government of his church, and a prostitution of the sacred ordinances of God, but flagrant injustice to those admitted unworthily. The rulers of a congregation are deceiving the wretched man whom they admit to holy ordinances without evidence of his holiness; and while they are bestowing upon him the name and privileges of a christian, no wonder that his heart should be hardened, and his conscience seared.

In American congregations, nothing is more common than a large number of individuals grown up to maturity unbaptized, just because their parents, though in many cases regular atten-

dants on public worship, and of good moral character, did not consider themselves justified in claiming the title of christian parents.

Where every man's child is baptized, and every man is admitted to church privileges, there is really no church, no separate society; and just in proportion as our churches approach to such a state we need not expect revivals; we need expect nothing but cold formality and spiritual death.

If we would see religious revivals prospering among us, we must exercise church discipline with more decision and honesty, sparing neither rich nor poor, if they are bringing dishonour on the name of Christ. On different subjects, the moral feeling of the community is dead; on the subject of drunkenness, every man knows that it is absolutely putrid. The state of public feeling is indeed such in reference to this crime, that it is often impossible to bring offenders to justice, so that in not a few cases, individuals openly and flagrantly intemperate, continue to occupy the pulpit of the gospel ministry, to the destruction of all that bears the name of religion and morality. We must bestir ourselves to create, by means of the truth, a healthy public opinion, which will sweep from the face of our country these abominations, for while they continue what else can we expect but an increase and perpetuation of baptized infidelity.

3. The cold, speculative system of scholastic catechizing, formerly pursued by many ministers, and the icy cold spelling and reading of the scriptures, in schools, which in time past retarded the march of christianity, are, it is hoped, gradually wearing away. They familiarized the young with awful truths, without any serious efforts to apply them to the heart and life; so that recurring again and again, in a dry, uninteresting system, these truths came to be treated as common things, and were heard without interest and without emotion.

4. There have been too long among us, christian brethren, coldness and alienation. Ministers, as well as people, of different parties, have been estranged; and, in such a state of disunion, what great or noble purposes can we expect to be accomplished? If you want religious revivals, cultivate towards each other more of the spirit of christian peace, of christian love; let us join, heart and hand, in every good work; and let no jealousies, or dissension of party, prevent us from uniting with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, for carrying forward the work of our common master.

5. A heavy drag on all religious advancement is an extensive deficiency, in public preaching and private exhortation, in press-

bring home the immediate acceptance of salvation on the understanding and the heart. Whether it is a fear of being charged with legality, or an ignorance of the harmony between God's sovereignty and man's accountability, I know not; but it is a melancholy fact, that many heartstirring sermons are rendered, in their conclusion, worse than powerless, by studied attempts to persuade the audience that they are not expected to do anything but wait. It is well known, that, in the practice of the multitude, waiting is just doing nothing at all, and worse than doing nothing at all; for, instead of sitting still, it is running rapidly the wrong way. If we are seriously intent on promoting religious revivals,—while we declare man's inability to do anything meritorious, and his entire dependence on divine grace, Oh, let us keep continually before our own minds, and the minds of our brethren, our solemn accountability to God for the use of those powers, and talents, and privileges, which he has bestowed; let us try our powers, and the proof of their weakness will throw us on Christ for support; let us engage with sincerity in every good word and work, remembering that with us all is imperfection—that all is sin, and that nothing less will satisfy Christ than casting ourselves unreservedly, with all our sins and unworthiness, on the infinite mercy of God in Jesus the Redeemer.

Let it not, however, be supposed, that I would lift the responsibility from the people to lay it on ministers. The least favoured among you have heard the truth much more faithfully preached than you have practised; and you have had purity of example before you, which you were not solicitous to follow.

Without you, and such as you, christian brethren, we can entertain no well grounded hopes of religious revivals. It is not by miraculous, but by human instrumentality, that God will effect revivals. His grace may sleep while his people sleep, but it will never sleep while his people work.

You will never, by going the usual round of dull ceremony, promote revivals in religion. There must be more life among us—more prayer, more hearty and persevering working among us, before revivals become extensive. People must strengthen the hands of their ministers, and co-operate with them, and religion must not be treated as a thing to be put on when we go to public worship on the Sabbath, and put off when we come away; it must be carried with us into the week, animate us in the business of the week; and whatever our other business may be, religion must be our *chief* business, our *one thing*

*needful*, without which all else would be worse than unprofitable and vain. Do not, I beseech you, leave religion merely to ministers of the Gospel, as though this were *their* trade, with which others have no right to intermeddle; your *own* salvation is your *own* concern, in which you must be deeply, and earnestly, and busily engaged, else you will never be saved; and the salvation of your brother will be a subject of interest to you, just in proportion as your own hearts feel the blessings of salvation, and are enlarged with gratitude to God, and love to your brother, by the mercies which yourselves have received.

Are we now seriously resolved to use every effort within the sphere of human power for obtaining the accomplishment of the great object which has brought us together? We can benefit by American experience; and whether we follow the noble example set us by America or not, this, at least, is certain, that if religion is not revived among us, the fault is not with God; and if our benevolent institutions languish, it is not because God is unwilling that his way should be known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations.

Brethren of the Christian Ministry, the Lord is doing great things. Who knows but our harvest is at hand. Let us with more zeal than ever press on our people the truth as it is in Jesus; let us single out individual cases, so that each sinner shall stand rebuked, and as it were alone in our presence, and that each child of God shall feel as though our preparation for the pulpit had been for himself alone. Let us cultivate more intimate acquaintance with our people, so that knowing each man's sorrows or joys, we may give to every one a portion in due season. Let us pray for our people, and study and work, and travail as in birth, for our people, and devote our whole energies to our Great Master's work.

And, oh, can we be too earnest in entreating our dear people to apply diligently to their hearts the truth, as spoken by us; to attend diligently on our ministry, to receive in faith the message which we bring, to abound in every good word and work.

While you are contented with low attainments in the christian life, you will only have low attainments; and while you neither look, nor pray, nor work for great things, there is no expectation of obtaining great things. Expect great things, pray for them, work for them, and by God's grace you shall have them. Hold meetings for social prayer, expressly for the objects which we have in view this evening; meet frequently, meet unanimously; ministers will be able to attend some of your meet-

ings, and it will be well; but when they are not present, let others lead; and while thus many hearts are alive to these glorious objects, and many secret and public prayers are ascending up in faith before the eternal throne on their behalf, and many energies, united by the bonds of christian love, are all active in promoting them, have we not, my christian brethren, ground for the most assured confidence that a gracious and faithful God will pour down a "blessing on the ministry of the gospel throughout the world, revive religion in the whole of Christendom, and give entire success to those benevolent enterprises which have for their object the world's conversion to God."

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

*To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.*

I BEG, through you, to give a few statements, respecting the nature of Presbyterian church government. The Presbyterian church acknowledges no head but Christ, and is independent of all subjection to human authority. Her rulers are Elders of her own appointment, chosen from her members. Her highest officer is a teaching Elder. Her lowest court is Session, consisting of the ruling and teaching Elders of a congregation. Presbyterianism is founded on the principles of representation, union, and the subordination in the Lord, of the few to the many. The appointment of officers rests with the people; the courts are representative; the whole congregations of the church are united by means of their representatives; Sessions are subordinate to Presbyteries, and Presbyteries to Synods, and all questions are settled by numerical majorities. Presbyterian courts lay claim to no legislative or compulsory power, like that of civil rulers; their only business being the application to the conscience, for the good of souls, of those spiritual laws which Christ has given, and which only effect externally the relation of individuals to the church.

A SESSION, consisting of the Minister and ruling Elders of a congregation, has the entire spiritual government and discipline of a congregation. The Minister, as Moderator, constitutes and concludes the meetings of Session by prayer, and presides. Two ruling elders, with their Pastor, form a quorum, competent to transact business.

The clerk of session, chosen from the ruling elders, keeps an accurate record of judicial proceedings, of marriages and

baptisms, as well as of persons admitted to the congregation, and of those leaving it. Each member of session should have a portion of the congregation allotted to his special oversight.

Meetings of session should be publicly intimated, when convenient. They are called by the Moderator, or by the request of two members.

Sessions may refer to a Presbytery or Synod questions of importance, or on which they cannot obtain unanimity; and any Elder dissenting from his brethren may require his dissent and reasons to be entered on their records, to which, if they please, they can enter an answer.

It is the privilege of the humblest Presbyterian, who conceives himself aggrieved by the lowest court, to appeal to the highest.

Sessions have in charge, **THE ADMISSION OF MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH.**

To the young of a congregation, a Session should direct parental care. Abundant opportunities of religious education should be afforded to them; and those of them, and those only, who, on voluntary application, give satisfactory evidence of conversion to God, should be admitted to church membership.

Members of the church, changing their residence, are censurable, who delay unnecessarily to connect themselves regularly with another congregation. Persons of other communions, giving evidence of being true christians, may be occasionally admitted to the privileges of church fellowship, on furnishing to the Session satisfactory reasons for making application.

Strict examination should be made in the case of members of other denominations wishing to connect themselves permanently with the Presbyterian Church, to know what is their character, what their motives, and whether or not they are fugitives from discipline. No church or congregation deserves the title Presbyterian, which, keeping an open door for receiving the piqued, the contentious, and reprobate of other denominations, acts as the common sewer of a whole district.

While all are invited to enjoy the advantages of christian instruction, none but those who afford undeniable evidence so far as man can judge, of having believed to the saving of their souls, should be admitted to the full privileges of church membership.

The church is a distinct society, governed by peculiar laws, and enjoying peculiar privileges, consequently none but her own members have any right to interfere in the choice of her officers.

All admitted to the privileges of membership in the Presbyterian Church, practically pledge themselves by entering, to attend regularly on the ordinances of God's worship, to obey Christ's commandment, by keeping up the remembrance of his death, to contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, to obey, in the Lord, the Church Courts; and to illustrate in their character, the duties and graces of the christian life.

Notwithstanding, however, such solemn pledges, alas, what a picture does a large portion of Presbyterian Ulster present!

To many congregations we look in vain for the efficient working of Presbyterianism. Is there a session regularly constituted, in the name of the Great Head of the Church? No. Are there men of blameless lives and honest report, who have been solemnly set apart to the responsible office of Elder? No. Are there means adopted for preventing the ignorant, the heretical, the profligate, from profaning the sacred institutions of Christ? No. Is there any discipline exercised on offenders against truth and holiness? No. Is there a choice of ministers by a majority of the church members? No. Where these are not, there may be the name of Presbyterianism, but that name is a mockery in the sight of men, and a flagrant abomination in the sight of God. Such a state of things **MUST NOT CONTINUE**. What signifies an empty cry of Presbyterianism in Synods, and Presbyteries, and at Ordinations, if Presbyterianism in practice is found to be an empty nut shell; and what else, but dressing a corpse in its shroud, is the boasting of Orthodoxy in the Ministry, while heresy and immorality among the other members of the church, are to every good man smoke in his nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

AN ELDER.

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## SKETCHES OF MODERN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

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### No. II.—CENTURY XVIII.

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#### CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—THE SECESSION—REMOTE CAUSES OF THE SECESSION.

IN 1702 King William died, and was succeeded by Queen Anne, daughter to James II. From the time of the accession of James to the English throne, Scotland and England were

governed by the same Sovereign, but each kingdom had a distinct Parliament. By the legislative Union effected in 1707, the two Parliaments were merged in one. At the revolution settlement in 1688, it had been enacted by the English Parliament, that the Episcopal form of church government should be established in England, and by the Scottish Parliament, that the Presbyterian should be established in Scotland; and now by one of the articles of Union, both Parliaments concurred in the act which retained the establishment of these two antagonist ecclesiastical systems in their respective countries. This measure created much deep and lasting dissatisfaction in the minds of the strict Presbyterians of Scotland. The commission of the General Assembly earnestly but ineffectually remonstrated with the Scottish Parliament against the admission of any stipulation for the permanent continuance of the English Hierarchy and Liturgy. No doubt the High Episcopalians, both in Scotland and in England, felt the same conscientious objections to the national establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland, that the strict Presbyterians felt to the establishment of Prelacy in England; and the two parties have all along felt the anomaly of the king being bound by the coronation oath, to the maintenance of both systems. Certain it is, that the Presbyterians were greatly grieved, especially when it was enacted that the sacramental test should be extended to members of the church of Scotland, as a qualification for civil offices in England, the taking of which was considered as a compromise of principle, as a renunciation of their religion, and as a sinful acknowledgment of an ecclesiastical system, against which, feelings of the deepest aversion were associated in the minds of the Scottish people, on account of the persecutions which had, for a series of years, been carried on by the ruling powers, in support of its civil establishment.

As a measure of national policy, the Union was attended by results highly beneficial to the Scottish nation. By the Union, the hands of the friends of the reformation and of the revolution were strengthened, in suppressing the two great rebellions; the first in 1715, when the Pretender, and the second in 1745, when the son of the Pretender, attempted to re-establish the Stuarts and arbitrary power on the throne of these kingdoms. Under the comparatively mild and beneficent sway of the house of Hanover, the established church has been exempted from those terrible evils which arose from the attempts of James and Charles first, and Charles and James second, to impose, by

civil penalties, a religious system on the christian people, to which they conceived it sinful to submit, and to assert the supremacy of the King in ecclesiastical causes, which was resisted as a sacrilegious invasion of the Redeemer's Headship in his church. No persecution for conscience' sake has been waged by the civil power against any class of Dissenters. With the possession of civil and religious liberty, science, learning, and the arts have grown and flourished. The great body of the people, once turbulent and barbarous, have become educated, intelligent, and orderly. Wealth has spread over the country. Social harmony prevails. Who has not heard of the schools and colleges of Scotland, and of her cities of palaces? What department of literature has not been cultivated with success? Clusters of men of genius have, from time to time, arisen, who, in poetry and in history, in medicine and in law, in the pulpit and from the press, as writers and as orators, have shed imperishable lustre on their country, and raised it to a high and enviable rank among the nations of the civilized world.

While great political good resulted from the Union, the intermeddling and encroachments of the civil power, with regard to religious matters, called into action a train of evils, which eventually led to a separation in the church of Scotland, and the alienation of a large portion of the people from her communion. During the life of William, there was no flagrant invasion of ecclesiastical privileges, but the Government of Queen Anne partook much of the old leaven of the arbitrary principles which seem to have been hereditary in the Stuart family. She and her ministers looked with jealousy on the popular form of the ecclesiastical government of the Scottish church, and their dislike was increased by the part which the church of Scotland took in procuring the act of succession in favour of the House of Hanover, to the exclusion of the Stuarts. Accordingly, it was not long till the privileges of the church were invaded. By an act of the united Parliament, procured in 1712, the law of patronage was enacted, by which the people were deprived of the right of choosing their own pastors, and the power of presenting ministers to vacant parishes was vested either in the crown, the principal landed proprietors, the magistrates, or the Universities. In the ecclesiastical courts a large party was found who favoured the measures of the Queen's Government. The strict party, however, uncompromisingly denounced this invasion of the right of church mem-

bers as sacrilegious robbery, and as opening up a wide door for simoniacal dealings between patron and presentee, and for an unsanctified ministry to destroy religion and to corrupt the church.

It was soon evident that the elements of disunion were already in existence, and two parties were brought out, by the progress of events, to act in open opposition to each other in ecclesiastical measures. At the Revolution settlement of the church, by an act of comprehension, originating with the court, and approved of by the General Assembly, a large number of the clergy of the late episcopal establishment had been allowed to retain their places as parish ministers, and as members of the ecclesiastical courts. No one, it was expressly declared, was excluded on account of his private judgment respecting church government. He was merely obliged to sign a formula stating, on this head, that "the church-government, as now settled by law, is the only government of *this* church." On this ground, three hundred of the episcopal clergy conformed. In an address from the commission of Assembly to the Queen, they thus say, "We cannot but lay before your Majesty this pregnant instance of our moderation, that since our late happy establishment there have been taken in and continued, hundreds of dissenting (that is, Episcopalian) ministers, upon the easiest terms." Many of the Episcopal clergy had rendered themselves odious by their concurrence in the severities which preceded the Revolution; and it can be considered no injustice to their memory to state, that not a few of them greatly disrelished the Calvinistic doctrine, and the exact discipline of the Presbyterians of the Covenant.\*

On the other hand, there was a strict party in the church courts, who, submitting to the magistrate in civil affairs, yet resisting any assumed supremacy on his part in ecclesiastical concerns, had been grieved that the Assembly which met at the call of Parliament, two years after the Revolution, had neglected to frame an act asserting the headship of Christ alone in his church; who were dissatisfied with the Scottish Parliament for consenting to the perpetual establishment of prelacy in England as one of the articles of Union; and who were still more dissatisfied with the parliamentary

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\* See Burnet's History, years 1662, 1667, 1686. Testimony of United Associate Synod—pp. 24-30.

enactment which vested in patrons the power of presenting ministers to vacant churches. Thus two parties began to be developed, and to stand out in broad opposition to each other. Discontent and dissension were soon plentifully sown in the minds of clergy and of laity; and, to aggravate the evil, in addition to the law of patronage, another absurd, impolitic, unchristian enactment, was, in the very same year, imposed by Parliament. This was the oath of abjuration—an oath which was imposed on the clergy under a penalty of ejection from their churches, and a fine of £500 sterling.

Though the Presbyterians detested Popery, and the Pretender for its sake, yet, deeming the oath to imply an approbation of the English establishment, and of the Union settlement, many chose to run the hazard of suffering, rather than violate their judgments and consciences by compliance. This was an apple of discord. The majority complied; a third part resisted. Friendships were broken up among ministers, and not a few of the people declined attending on the public ministrations of those who took the oath however conscientiously. Thus mutual alienation, and bitter disputes, were kindled among the clergy and throughout the community. Such are the evil effects of legislative enactments, which do violence to the consciences of men, or invade those rights and liberties which Christ has conferred upon his church. The christian minister, when invested with the sacred office, does not abandon his right as a citizen to discuss the measures of government, or to lift his voice in favour of justice and liberty; the civil ruler is, at the same time, under a law to God, to submit to the influence, and to advance the interests of pure religion: but who is there, whatever may be his views on the question of ecclesiastical establishments, who, while he condemns the officious meddling of intriguing, slavish, intolerant ecclesiastics in political matters, does not also execrate and condemn the intermeddling of godless and unprincipled statesmen in religious and ecclesiastical affairs? What a pregnant source of corruption has this been to the church in every age! What a fearful aggregate of suffering, bloodshed, and crime, has it caused! When will statesmen and ecclesiastics learn wisdom? When will they be taught that the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and the temporal kingdoms of this world, though they should harmonize, are yet distinct; and when will they learn to confine themselves, in their official capacity, to the discharge of the peculiar duties of their respective provinces, which, even when harmonizing, should never be confounded?

During the rebellion of 1715, the year immediately following the accession of George I. to the crown, the whole body of the clergy were animated with ardent and patriotic attachment to the House of Hanover. In a letter to the Assembly of 1716, their valuable services were warmly acknowledged by the King. Happy had it been for the church of Christ in Scotland, had all the ministers of the establishment been united in an attachment equally unanimous to the evangelical doctrines of her confession. That a considerable number entertained different views soon became apparent. The law of patronage was not unproductive of anticipated mischief. Ministers had been imposed on parishes, not only without the consent, but in opposition to the minds of the christian people. Church courts, while possessing a veto, usually ordained the nominee of the patron, whatever might be the popular opposition. Error in doctrine, laxity in discipline, and tyranny in administration, were thus let in upon the church, and gradually developed themselves with the progress of events. Even before the revival of the law of patronage, the prevalence of legal doctrine was deeply lamented by several eminent ministers. In 1712, Halyburton bewailed on his death-bed, the indifference that prevailed among a large portion of the clergy to the peculiarities of the gospel and the power of godliness, and exclaimed, "Oh that the ministry of Scotland may be kept from destroying the Church of Scotland: Oh that I could obtain it from them with tears of blood, to be concerned for the Church of Scotland."

Mr. Simpson, professor of divinity, in the college of Glasgow, had been charged before the General Assembly of 1714, with teaching sentiments at variance with the fundamental doctrine of original sin. He had been reviving the Pelagian heresy. The case was not issued until 1717. He was found guilty; and was directed by the Assembly to abstain from teaching such sentiments in future, but was allowed to retain his professorship. The same assembly which had dealt so leniently with Professor Simpson, condemned the following proposition, which had been adopted by the Presbytery of Aughtarder, as a means of ascertaining the sentiments of candidates for the ministry, namely, "It is unsound to teach that men must first forsake sin in order to come to Christ." This step greatly grieved the minds of many. With a view to the diffusion of evangelical sentiments, Mr. Hogg of Carnock, was induced to republish an old English work, by Edward Fisher, which had been in circulation for eighty years, entitled

"The Marrow of Modern Divinity." Proceeding on the report of a committee, the Assembly of 1720 were led to pass a rash sentence of condemnation on this book, as heretical and dangerous. Conceiving that the Assembly had, by this procedure, done injury to a number of gospel truths, Boston, Hogg, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, with eight other ministers, presented a remonstrance to the ensuing Assembly, praying for a repeal of the act of the preceding year. This petition was refused, and in return, twelve queries were addressed to the twelve brethren. To these they returned answers, and the document containing their reply is an able exposition and defence of the principles condemned. Aware of the general offence given by the condemnation of the "Marrow," and feeling the force of the powerful reply of the twelve brethren, the Assembly of 1722 passed an explanatory act; but this was far from going the length of giving satisfaction to those who opposed the condemnatory act; and what rendered the breach still more wide, the twelve brethren were sentenced to be rebuked. The great doctrine upheld by Boston, Hogg, the Erskines, and their associates, was, that on receiving Christ by faith, christians are made free from the commanding and condemning power of the law demanding, as a covenant of works, an obedience sinlessly perfect on pain of eternal death; though they were exceedingly careful to prevent objections, and to guard against an Antinomian abuse of the doctrine, by exhibiting the believer as born again to holiness, and placed under the law of Christ, with a heart and a capacity for new obedience. The twelve brethren were assailed with great violence, from the pulpit and the press, and efforts were made to arouse the *odium theologicum*, the religious rancour of the public mind against them as Antinomians, and as enemies of morality; while their opponents were charged with legalism, with holding views subversive of the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, and with representing the gospel as a new and modified law proposing faith, repentance, and sincere, but imperfect obedience, as the terms or conditions of salvation.

In the General Assembly of 1729, after a process which had been carried on for three years, and a trial which lasted eight days, Professor Simpson was found guilty of teaching doctrines contrary to the Deity of Christ, and was suspended from the discharge of the office of Professor of Divinity, while many were offended that he was not degraded. Violent settlements of ministers in parishes were now loudly complain-

ed of ; the Assembly evinced a growing disposition to support the presentations of patrons in disregard to the opposition of the people. The troubled waters rose higher and higher. Opposition to the prevailing party in the Assembly was so strong, that to suppress it, an enactment was made in 1730, that *no protest or dissent should be entered on the minutes*. Two years after, a representation of grievances, signed by forty-two ministers, and another by seventeen hundred private persons, were rejected ; and when fifteen ministers protested against this procedure, the *protest was not permitted to be recorded*. Thus, for a series of years, it appears, that the Church of Scotland was in a state of continual storm, and matters indicated a rapidly approaching crisis.

That crisis at length arrived. The Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, of Stirling, being Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, it became his duty to preach before that ecclesiastical body, at its meeting in Perth, on the 10th of October, 1732. In his sermon, from Psalm cxviii. 22, "the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner," he expressed himself with great energy and boldness, but, at the same time, with great firmness and deliberation, against the growing defections in evangelical doctrine and scriptural discipline ; and in particular, against the violent settlement of ministers in reclaiming parishes, by the rigorous enforcement of the tyrannical and anti-christian law of lay patronage ; a law which he exhibited as an invasion of the rights and liberties conferred by Christ on his people, and of the prerogative of Christ as the only king and head of his church. This fearless exposure of existing evils was keenly resented by the prevailing party. As soon as the Synod was constituted, the appointment of a committee was obtained, to draw up a report respecting the offensive parts of the sermon. Erskine declared openly that, what he had stated, was not uttered extemporaneously, under the influence of temporary excitement, but the fruit of settled conviction, and deliberately committed to writing in his study. The sermon, as it stood in the manuscript, and as it was delivered, has been before the world for a century. After a keen and protracted debate of three days, and after several of Erskine's friends had withdrawn through fatigue and exhaustion, the Synod, by the small majority of six votes, decided that he was censurable on account of several expressions in his sermon, "*tending to disturb the peace of the church, and impugning several acts of Assembly and proceedings of church-judicatories ;*" and

appointed him to be rebuked at their bar. Against this sentence Mr. Erskine, with twelve ministers and two elders, protested and appealed to the General Assembly of 1733. That assembly confirmed the decision of the Synod, and ordered him to be rebuked. Convinced that he had uttered nothing inconsistent with the law of Christ, or with the accredited confession of the Established Church, Erskine declared that he could not, without the violation of a good conscience in the sight of God, submit to this censure; and, being joined by the Rev. William Wilson, Alex. Moncrieff, and Jas. Fisher, he protested against the sentence of Assembly, asserting "the liberty of preaching the same truths of God, and of testifying against the same, or like defections, on all proper occasions." The four brethren having retired, they were ordered by the assembly to appear the following day. A committee was appointed to persuade them to withdraw their protest; but the brethren remaining firm, the Assembly ordered them to appear before the Commission in the August following, to express sorrow for their conduct and retract their protest. In the event of their refusal to submit, the Commission was directed to suspend them from the ministry; and, should they preach while under sentence of suspension, the Commission to meet in November was authorized to proceed to inflict a higher censure. The Commission which met in August was unable, as seems to have been clearly anticipated, to induce the protesting brethren to acquiesce in the decision of Assembly; and did proceed, notwithstanding petitions from three synods for a delay of the sentence, to suspend them from the exercise of their ministerial function. The brethren, however, persisted unmoved, and gave in a "protestation," declaring the sentence null and void, and that they would persevere in the exercise of their ministry as if no such censure existed. They appeared again before the November Commission; and though seven of the 15 synods pertaining to the General Assembly remonstrated against the measure, they proceeded to pass the sentence of separation from their respective churches on the protesting brethren, "declaring them no longer ministers of this church, and prohibiting all ministers of this church to employ them in any ministerial function;" appointing intimation of the sentence to be made in their several churches, and also to be given *to those holding the office of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE in their respective districts.* This sentence was carried only by the casting vote of the moderator. Supported by their respective

sessions and churches, and borne up by that fortitude which is inspired by a good cause and a good conscience, they protested against this decision, asserted the validity of their pastoral relation to those of their flocks who should adhere to them, and declared a *Secession*, not from the doctrine or government of the established church, but from the prevailing party in her judicatories. This event took place on the 16th Nov., 1733.

The Protesting brethren being thrust out of ministerial communion by the sentence of the Commission, and having, in consequence, declared a Secession from the Established Church, met a few weeks after at the bridge of Gairney, and having engaged in prayer and deliberation for two days, did, on the 6th December, 1733, constitute themselves into a Presbytery—afterwards known by the name of the Associate Presbytery. Their congregations, approving of their conduct, adhered to them. In the May following, they published the reasons of their protestation against the sentence of the Commission, entitled, “A testimony to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland.”

BEDE.

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## OUR LORD'S PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE.

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“Consider—the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”—  
 Heb. iii. 1.

SOME writers, striving to shake off the great Bible doctrine of the atonement, have spoken of the priesthood and sacrifice of our Lord, as if they were only figurative expressions used in allusion to the priests and sacrifices of the Old Testament. This is a gross mistake. Our Lord's priesthood and sacrifice are real, and received not their name from any mere allusion or accommodation to typical priests and sacrifices; but these, on the contrary, owed their name and their institution to Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, the prefiguration of which was their principal design and glory. After all, instead of presenting an exact picture, they furnished no more than a rude and imperfect outline. The Apostle calls them “a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things;” they were not a complete representation, such as the image is in the glass, the statue or the painting, but dark and indistinct as when reflected by the shadow.

One objection which Jews would, at first, feel to christianity, was the simplicity and spirituality of its worship. In the christian assemblies, there was no blazing altar, no bleeding victim, no smoking incense, no officiating priest. "Jehovah," might the Jew say to the christian preacher, "has given us a religion, of which divinely appointed priests and sacrifices form an essential and prominent part; but I see no such provision made by christianity." "You do greatly err," replies the christian, "not understanding the typical nature of your own institutions. Do we make void priesthood and sacrifice by christianity? Nay, we establish them. We have an altar; we have a priest; we have a sacrifice. Our altar, priest, and sacrifice, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Having once offered himself a propitiation for sin, he has entered in the capacity of our High Priest to the heavenly sanctuary, there to appear in the presence of God for us, presenting the merits of his own blood, and the efficacy of his continual intercession. Christianity, therefore, has superseded and abolished the divinely instituted Levitical ceremonial, by substituting something infinitely better in its place. In the room of human priests and animal victims, we have the atonement and advocacy of the eternal Son of God; we have that which can expiate guilt, pacify the conscience, and purify the heart, which typical offerings never could, nor were intended to do. We have the substance in place of the shadow; the imperishable reality instead of the temporary figure." Such would be the address of the christian to the Jew. Such is the doctrine unfolded throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In a former article it was shown, that the divine constitution of the Aaronic priesthood symbolized our Lord's appointment by the Father to execute the office of priest on behalf of his church. It was also seen, that as the great object for which a priest was ordained was to offer sacrifices, our Lord, in correspondence with the type, must, of necessity, offer that sacrifice which was ordained, according to the terms of the everlasting covenant, to be the price of life and redemption.

While the Aaronic priesthood prefigured the priesthood of our Lord, how immensely did it fail to exhibit its infinite dignity and worth. As much instruction may, therefore, be derived from marking the contrast, as from tracing the resemblance. The typical priest was a man taken from among men, partaking of the same common nature with his brethren, and disqualified, from experience of human infirmity, to have com-

passion on the miserable. So it was with our Redeemer. He became our kinsman. He was made flesh. He took a real human nature,—a true body, and a reasonable soul. “It behoved him, in all respects, to be made like unto his brethren,” that from a participation of all the outward and inward woes to which they are subject in mind and body, “he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;” and, from experience of temptation and suffering, be “able to succour them that are tempted.” Here, however, the type fails. The ceremonial priest was mere man; but our Lord was more. He had a divine, as well as a human nature. In human nature he was, in all respects, like unto his brethren; in his divine he was, in all respects, like unto the Father. One with his brethren in humanity, he is one with the Father in Divinity. Our High Priest united deity and humanity in his mediatorial person. He was thus qualified to be the representative of man with God, and the representative of God to man. He was qualified by the peace-making blood of his sacrificial cross to reconcile man with his Maker, and to open up “a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us,” whereby we might have access to the mercy-seat in heaven, and our souls be admitted into his everlasting kingdom. It was to divine appointment that the institution of typical priests and sacrifices owed its whole worth, but our Lord’s priesthood and propitiation was efficacious not only because of appointment, but because of the infinite dignity of his person. To what human priest, whether Aaron or Melchizedec,—to what angel was it ever said, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee”? He is the “only begotten and well-beloved Son:” he was the “image of God,” and “was God:” “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” how qualified, how “able,” therefore, was he to act as the reconciling priest of his church before the high throne of offended heaven. Being infinitely dignified and infinitely dear to the Father, his obedience, sacrifice, and intercession, must of necessity possess an intrinsic merit, well pleasing to God to count for righteousness to all who plead it for their justification, and inspiring the most heartfelt confidence and the liveliest hope.

Sinlessness was also a distinguishing characteristic of our Lord’s priesthood. All earthly priests were partakers of a sinful nature. They were required to be good men; the

were to be free from certain bodily defects, as emblematical of moral qualifications; "Holiness to the Lord," was the motto sworn in front of the High Priest's mitre; but even when spiritual and holy, and this, though the office required, it did not necessarily convey or secure—the priests were yet not wholly free from moral infirmity. Hence they "needed to offer sacrifice, first for their own sins, and then for the people's." But Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, was perfectly free from sin; and not only was he perfectly free from sin, but was possessed of the highest moral excellence, and perfectly obeyed the law of God in all its requirements. On him the Spirit was poured out without measure; and in him were combined all divine perfections and all human graces. In the records of his life and of his death, his character stands forth exhibiting an assemblage of moral excellencies, before which all human virtue becomes dim and lustreless, and which awakens the admiration of all good beings. What shall we say respecting the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's humanity? \* Perish the detested imagination! Never, O spotless lamb of God, shall our souls endure that which would impute a stain to thee! True, Jesus Christ did not assume such a condition of humanity as Adam possessed in innocence, but one partaking of those afflictions of mind, and heart, and body, which are the penal consequences of the fall; still he was free from all moral taint. He knew no sin. He came not by ordinary generation; his flesh was formed by the supernatural agency of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin; the stain of hereditary depravity touched him not; the prince of this world had nothing

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\* This heresy has, of late, been boldly put forward by the Rev. Edward Irving. In his work on the human nature of Christ, (p. 126), he has the following language, "Manhood, after the fall, broke out into sins of every name and aggravation, corrupt to the very heart's core, and from the centre of its inmost will, sending out streams as black as hell. *This is the human nature which every man is clothed upon withal, which the Son of Man was clothed upon withal, bristling thick and strong with sin, like the hairs upon the porcupine.*" Again, (p. 127,) he says, "I believe it to be most Orthodox to hold, that Christ could say until his resurrection, Not I, but sin that tempteth me in my flesh; just as after the resurrection he could say, I am separate from sinners." Yet, Mr. Irving, in the same book strenuously maintains, that Christ through the Holy Ghost, never committed sin. Such are the strange contradictions and absurdities of which men are guilty, by giving way to speculation and fancy, on those solemn subjects, on which the light of Revelation only should be followed as an arbiter and guide.

in him. He was not under Adam's headship; but was himself the covenant head of a spiritual seed. He became obedient unto pain, privation, and death; but this was altogether voluntary and substitutionary; not for himself, but for us, that he might be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; that he might die the just for the unjust; that he who knew no sin might be made sin (a sin offering) for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Perfectly sinless, perfectly obedient to the law, he was such a priest as we needed; not one who required a priest and sacrifice and salvation for himself, but who was possessed of all moral fitness to be priest and sacrifice and salvation to his people, throughout all nations, and all generations. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens who needeth not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself."

The Levitical priests were mortal men. The son rose up in room of the father: generation followed generation: and it was by succession that the priesthood was maintained. The office was frequently changing hands: the institution itself has come to a close, and the order of human priesthood has been abolished for ever. But our Lord is an undying, unchanging priest. His office is incommunicable and intransmissible. He abideth a priest continually. He is a priest for ever. With what admirable force and beauty does the apostle exhibit the constancy and the efficacy of our Lord's priesthood, in contrast with the changing priesthood of the Levitical order. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this *man*, (priest-man is not in the original) because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The sacrifices offered by the typical priests, were animals. These were to be clean and free from blemish. The victim was killed, its blood was sprinkled upon the altar, and a portion of the fat and flesh burned with fire. In sacrifice, the blood was a principal part; so much so, that in process of time came to be used to denote the whole sacrifice. Hence, the importance, the sacredness, the awfulness, associated with blood in both testaments: hence, when the grant of animal food was made to Noah, the blood was forbidden: hence, the

Apostles, in the council of Jerusalem, directed christians to abstain from blood: hence, by the law of Moses the eating of blood was prohibited under the severest penalty. Levit. xvii. 10, 11—"I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and I will cut him off from among the people." Mark the reason assigned—"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement." Now, Jesus Christ is the Priest of his church; and what was the sacrifice which, being a priest, he must of necessity offer? That sacrifice was his body, (Heb. x. 10,)—his soul—(Is. liii. 10,)—his human nature—himself: "He loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." In the typical sacrifice was it necessary that the victim should be slain? Jesus Christ became obedient unto death: he laid down his life for us: he gave death for death, and life for life. In the typical sacrifice was the victim in whole or in part burned with fire? The Lord Jesus was made a curse for us; it pleased Jehovah to bruise him and to afflict him in his fierce anger. In all the figurative sacrifices did the blood constitute an essential part of the atonement? Jesus Christ shed his own most precious blood. By this he purchased his church. By this he obtained eternal redemption for us. By this he made expiation, and removed our legal liability to punishment. By this he made propitiation, and opened up a way for our restoration to the favour of God, honourable to the divine perfections. Feeling how totally unfit animal victims were to give any representation of the boundless generosity and love which moved the Redeemer to become our substitute and sacrifice, the inspired writers lay hold of that rare example of self-sacrificing friendship, wherein a man voluntarily devotes himself to death to save the life of his friend. Even this falls immensely short of exhibiting the greatness and peculiarity of his love. "Greater love," says our Lord himself, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends:" but he laid down his life for us when we were enemies. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The grand idea which the wisdom of God thought fit to employ the institution of the sacrifices to stamp upon the minds of men was the necessity of an atonement. Why do we find every Old Testament Saint, from Abel to Abraham,

standing at the altar and offering up sacrifice? Why from Adam to Christ was this an established and necessary mode of approaching God? Why were such a multitude and variety of sacrificial rites enjoined by the Mosaic dispensation? Why was it that yearly and daily sacrifices were offered? Why was there such a prodigious destruction of animal life? Why were almost all things by the law purged with blood, and why without shedding of blood was there no remission? It was not possible that these sacrifices should take away sins. For offences against the ceremonial law, the Levitical sacrifices were, indeed, an atonement. They purified from ceremonial uncleanness, and obtained the remission of the temporal penalties of the ceremonial law. But this was a figurative atonement. They could not expiate moral guilt, nor procure remission from eternal punishment. They might "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," but they could not purge the conscience from the fear of wrath, nor the horrors of despair. In the nature of things it was not possible that the blood of animals could make any thing more than a typical or figurative atonement. They were beasts—without reason—without soul—without immortality—without accountability—having a nature entirely different from man; how was it possible, then, that they could expiate the guilt of an immortal being, and procure absolution from everlasting punishment? What proportion was there between the sufferings and death of beasts, and the dishonour which the sinner had done to God, and the eternal doom to which he was consigned? The design of an atonement is to display God's moral aversion against sin, and his determination to punish it, so that the dispensation of forgiveness may not only be in harmony with the claims of the divine law, but honourable to the divine perfections and government. The design of an atonement is to make the exercise of mercy consistent with the rights of justice, and to provide means for effecting the moral reformation of the offender, while securing his deliverance from everlasting punishment; to exhibit the divine wrath against transgression so effectually as to turn away the soul from it with aversion and fear; but at the same time to make such a display of the divine clemency and grace as may win our affections, awaken our admiration and gratitude, and fill our hearts with love to him who gives us such convincing demonstration of his love. Such an atonement could only be effected by the sufferings and death of the incarnate Son of God. "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood."

In the atoning sacrifice of our Redeemer, how are the rights of Deity secured, while effectual provision is made for the eternal interests of man? In Christ crucified, we behold God's grand display of wisdom, and justice, and grace. He sent his Son to be the propitiation for sin; in this he declared his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He spared not his own Son; in this he declared that he loved us. Look, then, to the atonement of Christ. It glorifies the divine perfections: it upholds and magnifies the divine law: it makes reconciliation for transgression: it manifests God's abhorrence of iniquity: it exhibits the most cogent motives to repentance and to holiness: it brings peace and hope and joy to the desponding heart: it fills the soul with songs of love and praise to Him who so loved us that he sent his Son to be our Saviour, and to him who so loved us that he redeemed us unto God by his own blood. Look to the atonement of Christ, and, as he was God manifested in the flesh, be convinced of its intrinsic efficacy and infinite worth. In faith and joy, let us receive this atonement. Let us with all our hearts embrace it as God's assurance to us, that he is willing freely to forgive us our sins, and be pacified toward us, notwithstanding our past rebellion. On this immoveable foundation, let us repose our hopes for eternity; persuaded that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, and that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But let us, at the same time, beware of perverting the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, to cherish the horrible imagination that God has given us any dispensation to continue in sin, with impunity; for one grand design in the exhibition of redemption, through the death of Christ is, to turn us from our sins, as well as to show us how they may be forgiven; and how shall we escape if we do not crucify that which crucified the Lord of glory?

There is a sacrifice of atonement: let us adore the divine mercy which has provided it, and let us fly for refuge to the salvation which it offers. There is but *one*: and this rejected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Many wish to bring other sacrifices—their mortifications—their alms—their virtues: but to attempt to substitute any supposed merit of our own in the place of Christ's atonement, is to provoke the displeasure instead of obtaining the favour of God. Sacrifices, indeed, we are required to bring; not sacrifices of atonement, but sacrifices of gratitude, devotedness and love: these put into the hands of our great Intercessor, and presented by him

to the Father, are sacrifices with which God is well pleased. And what, if with an eternity of coming wrath before us, we should live and die as if no refuge or ransom had been provided? Great is our madness, and dreadful must be our doom; for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation!

The way of salvation is the same for all men, in every age. In the days of the types, it was the same as it is now, and it is the same now that it was then. Under the Old Testament, it was not enough to express sorrow, to pray for mercy, and to reform the life: it was necessary that the worshipper should bring the appointed sacrifice to the altar; not that the animal could take away his sin, but by laying his hand on the head of the victim, confessing his sin over it, and then delivering it to the priest to be offered, he expressed his faith in the necessity and in the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of the coming Redeemer. That Redeemer has come; and while he has put away all sin-offerings by the *one* offering of himself, he has confirmed the great truth, that without shedding of blood is no remission. God requires us to repent; he requires us to be holy; he requires us to do good; but let us remember, that not repentance, nor holiness, nor any good works, but the death of Christ, is the sacrifice of atonement; and that this atonement, instead of setting aside the necessity of repentance, holiness, or good works, is that only which secures and makes effectual provision for their existence. The blood of animal victims, it would now be shocking and criminal to offer; but behold the Lamb of God! He taketh away the sin of the world; his blood cleanseth from all sin. This offering let us bring; this sacrifice let faith hold up and present before the mercy-seat; this blood let us prayerfully plead as God's grand expression of grace and good will to man, and as his warrant of assurance to us, that he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall with him also freely give us all things.

CEPHAS.

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## LUTHER VIEWED AS A TRANSLATOR OF THE BIBLE.

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THE immortal Luther is well known as the intrepid reformer—the bold corrector of ecclesiastical abuses and corruptions—the splendid and successful champion of Protestantism. By his exertions in the cause of truth, an earthquake shock was given to the Papal system, and the Vatican trembled with

unders, not its own. In the first instance, he stood almost alone in the conflict—but the principles of the Reformation spreading rapidly in Germany, and other countries following the noble example, his hands were strengthened, and he had abundant cause to thank God and take courage.

One of the principal circumstances which contributed to free men's minds from the thralldom of Popery was *the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongues*. As the Reformation advanced, Luther became more fully convinced of the necessity of furnishing his countrymen with a German translation of the Bible. Returning from the memorable diet at Worms, in the year 1521, he was seized, by order of Frederick, Elector of Saxony, and confined in the castle of Wartburg, probably with the view of concealing him from his enemies. In this place of retirement, which he called his Patmos, he commenced the translation of the New Testament from the original Greek, and had it completed in 1522, at the time of his liberation. Before publication it was submitted to the accomplished Melancthon for revision, and Luther had the edition published in a cheap form, to secure more general circulation among the mass of the people. Such was the rapid sale of this translation, that before the conclusion of the same year a second edition was called for. Of the labour expended on it, and the aid which the author derived from the services of Melancthon, some idea may be formed from the following circumstances. In a letter addressed to Spalatin, Secretary to Frederick of Saxony, Luther says, "I translated not only John's Gospel, but the whole of the New Testament, in my Patmos; but Melancthon and I have now begun to revise the whole of it, and it will, by the blessing of God, do us credit. We sometimes need your assistance to direct us to suitable modes of expression. Prepare yourself, therefore, but supply us only with such words as are simple, and avoid all that are confined in their use to the camp or the court. We wish the book to be distinguished for the simplicity of its style. To accomplish this in one difficult passage, we beg you will furnish us with the names, colours, and, if possible, a sight of the *precious stones* mentioned in Revelation xxi." This request alluded to the collection of gems in the possession of the Elector. It is almost needless to add that it was acceded to; and the *precious stones* in question transmitted for the inspection of Luther and his friend. Again, in a letter written by Melancthon, on the 5th of May, 1522, he states that the whole version was then in the hands of the printers, and that he had consulted

many learned men, in reference to the different kinds of *money* mentioned in the New Testament, in order that the translation might express them with the greatest possible accuracy. He also begs his correspondent (George Sturciad, the celebrated physician,) to state his own opinion, and to consult Mutianus, a profound adept in Roman antiquities; requesting, at the same time, an immediate reply, as the printing was going on with great expedition.

Having accomplished the translation of the NEW TESTAMENT, our Reformer proceeded without delay to the OLD. On the 2d of Nov. 1522, he writes thus:—"In my translation of the Old Testament I am only in Leviticus. It is inconceivable how much writing letters, business, conversation and many other things, have interrupted my progress. I am now determined to shut myself up at home, and to use dispatch, so that the five books of Moses may be sent to press by January. We shall print them separately. After *that* we proceed to the historical parts of scripture, and lastly to the Prophets. The *size* and *price* render it necessary to make these divisions in the publication."

Luther encountered great difficulty in translating the Old Testament, owing to the different idioms of the Hebrew and German languages. In a letter to Wincelaus Lincus, referring to this as an arduous part of his undertaking, he has the following remarks:—"How difficult and laborious the task, to force the Hebrew writers to speak German, which they resist like the nightingale refusing to quit its delightful melody to imitate the coarse notes of the monotonous cuckoo." The difficulties arising out of imperfect acquaintance with the natural history of the animals mentioned in the sacred books were, in a great measure, overcome by the friendly aid of Spalatin, who communicated "much information respecting different species of *insects*, and *reptiles*, as well as of *wild beasts* and *raptacious birds*." The sacrificial terms employed in the Bible naturally demanded minute attention, and the means which our great Reformer adopted for expressing them with exactness, are strikingly illustrative of his genius and indefatigable industry. He caused butchers to dissect, in his own house, the different kinds of animals anciently offered in sacrifice, that by close inspection of the several parts he might be able to fix the names with precision. This was the true way of going to work, and, viewed in connexion with the eminent qualifications of the translator, prepares our minds for receiving intelligence of the celebrity of Luther's version.

He did not trust entirely to his own judgment in the execution of the task. Several eminent professors of divinity assisted; of whom the principal were, Philip Melancthon, John Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Casper Cruciger, and Matthew Aurogallus. Their arrangement was to meet from time to time, to consider the portions of the translation as it proceeded. At these meetings Luther always presided, having before him the Hebrew Bible, the Latin Vulgate, and his own *Manuscript version*. Melancthon brought the Greek, Cruciger the Chaldee, and the other Professors the Rabbinical writings; and so anxious were they to secure correctness, that they sometimes returned *fourteen* successive days, to consider a single *line*, or even a *word*.

The circulation of this version of the scriptures was immense. After Luther's decease, editions were multiplied so rapidly, that between the years 1534, (when the first edition was printed) and 1574, a hundred thousand copies were issued from the office of one printer only.

In his history of Charles V., Robertson bears the following testimony to the eminent services which this translation rendered to christianity in Germany, and throughout the world:—"Luther was reckoned a great master of the purity of his mother tongue, and could express himself with all the elegance of which it is capable. By his own assiduous application, together with the assistance of Melancthon, and several other of his disciples, he finished part\* of the New Testament in the year 1522; and the publication of it proved more fatal to the church of Rome than that of all his own works. It was read with wonderful attention and avidity by persons of every rank. They were astonished at discovering how contrary the precepts of the author of our religion are to the inventions of those priests who pretended to be his vice-gerents; and, having now in their hands the rule of faith, they thought themselves qualified, by applying it, to judge of the established opinions, and to pronounce when they were conformable to the standard, or when they departed from it. The great advantages arising from Luther's translation of the Bible encouraged the advocates for reformation in the other countries of Europe to imitate his example, and to publish versions of the scriptures in their respective languages."

D.

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\* The historian is in error when he asserts that *part* of the New Testament was finished in 1522; the *whole* of the translation was completed, and in the hands of the printers, in the *May* of that year.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.]

## REVIEW.

*A Synopsis of the Scripture Proofs of the Trinity, by the Rev. Daniel Bagot, A. B. Chaplain of St. Patrick's Church, Newry. Dublin: Martin Keene & Son, 1831.*

THIS admirable work is divided into two parts. The first part contains a synopsis of Trinitarianism, and of the scriptural proofs by which it is established. The statement of the doctrine, and of its evidence from the inspired volume, is short but comprehensive. The unity of God, and the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, who possess the same nature and perfections, are stated with great clearness and precision. The proofs of this system follow in an overpowering array of scriptural testimony.

The second part of this production is directed against the Rev. John Mitchel's *Objections to the Trinitarian System*. The latter work had been published for some years, but unnoticed by any answer. A reply was deemed unnecessary, or, more probably, unlikely to recompense the author, or even to pay the expense of publication. From this silence of Trinitarians, their opponents took occasion to represent Mr. Mitchel's work not only as unanswered, but unanswerable.

The work itself, however, in no way justified such an assertion. It is, indeed, characterized by a spirit of mildness and conciliation. The author shows himself above scurrility, and never descends to the low arts of abuse and personality, though he sometimes forgets his usual fairness, and represents his opponents as deriving their theology, not from the Bible, but from the Athanasian Creed or the Westminster Confession. But his work is marked by little originality of thought, and his arguments have been repeated, from age to age, from the time of Arius till the present day.

Mr. Bagot's reply is able and successful. Equal to his antagonist in mildness, and equally averse from invective, he is his superior in dialectics. In style, the *Synopsis* is a specimen of unpretending simplicity. The author aims merely at precision and perspicuity. He has been content with the plainness of didactic writing, without aspiring after tropes and figures, or the loftier flights of impassioned eloquence. In this he has shown the soundness of his judgment, and wisely avoided the fault of some moderns, who, through utter perversion of taste, sparkle without light, exhibit point without meaning, and display verbiage without ideas.

The author of the Synopsis excels in an extensive acquaintance with the Bible, and a happy application of its contents to his subject. He moves through his work with perfect ease. He never seems to labour—but proceeds as if unconscious of his power. His proofs are arranged with much judgment: and the connexion of each scriptural quotation, and its design in holy writ, are brought to bear on the point under discussion with luminous concentration.

Candour pervades every page. The writer practises none of that trickery and hair-splitting hypercriticism which distinguish and degrade those polemics who contend not for truth, but for victory. He has, from his overflowing treasury, supplied a vast mass of evidence, which, by judicious condensation, he has comprised in small bounds. The mind which can resist such conclusive reasoning, must assuredly labour under the influence of prepossession. The reader has only to make himself master of the Synopsis, to appreciate the triumphant evidence by which the Orthodox faith is supported.

MELANCTHON.

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## UNITARIANISM IN ENGLAND.

“From a calculation made on the returns printed in the *Unitarian Chronicle* for September, October, and November last, it appears that there are in England about 200 congregations (Presbyterian, general Baptist, &c.) of Unitarian, *alias* Socinian, principles. Of these 180 never exceed 250 hearers, and the average is below 100; 20 consist between 250 and 500 hearers; and about *four* may sometimes approach towards 1000 or 1200 hearers. The Unitarian chapel at Birmingham is stated to be attended by about 1100: Finsbury Chapel, London, has about 700; Hackney Chapel, 500; Nottingham, 500; Bridport, 500; Newcastle, 500; Chorobent, Lancashire, 500; Bolton, 400; Leicester, 400; Essex-street, London, 350. With the exception of these and a few others, the congregations of this sect present only skeleton regiments. ‘To Unitarians,’ says a writer in the *Monthly Repository*, ‘a Bristol or a Manchester audience is magnificent! But let those half dozen flourishing congregations be deemed of as highly as we will, still *six* prosperous societies, out of some three hundred, is a small proportion. Of our own knowledge we can speak of some *scores* that scarcely show signs of life.—The number of hearers in them will not average more than *thirty*.’ This writer, himself a Unitarian, while bearing evidence to the dying state of the greater part of the congregations, appears to over-rate their total number. From 220 to 230 must be, we are persuaded, the utmost number; and the total number of hearers cannot exceed 12,000, or, at most, 15,000. The Orthodox Dissenting congregations of the three denominations exceed 2,200 in England alone; and the aggregate of attendants is estimated at nearly a *million*. The

total number of Dissenting Congregations of every Protestant denomination in England and Wales is upwards of 7,500. Such is the proportion which *Unitarianism* bears to *Evangelical* dissent."—*London Patriot*.

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### OPENING OF A HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

THE Secession Congregation of Carnabuoy, (near Coleraine,) under the pastoral care of the Rev. James Mayne, have completed, during the past year, the erection of a very neat and commodious house for public worship. The building is *fifty-four feet* by *thirty-four* in the clear, and has two doors in front, opposite to which, at the further side, is the pulpit, occupying a central situation. The gallery extends all round, supported on cast-metal pillars, is well lighted, and judiciously planned, commanding every where a distinct view of the pulpit. The house will accommodate upwards of six hundred persons. It was opened the 6th of May last, when an eloquent and impressive sermon, from Gal. vi. 14, was delivered by the Rev. Thos. Thomson, of Kilraughts. At the close of the discourse, which was heard throughout with profound attention, a collection was taken, amounting to £23.

We heartily congratulate both minister and people on so interesting an occasion; long may they enjoy together the blessings of the gospel of peace, in the house which they have dedicated to the service of the God of their fathers.

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### ORDINATION.

On Friday the 9th Nov. last, the Rev. Hugh Smythe was ordained to the pastoral charge of the congregation of Craigmore, Randalstown, in connexion with the Primitive Secession Church. The solemn services of the day were conducted by the Rev. R. J. Bryce, LL.D., Rev. Hugh M<sup>c</sup>Intyre, and the Rev. James Bryce.

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### Obituary.

DIED—Dec. 22d, at his house, of a decline, Rev. W. Beatty, aged 68 years. He was for 40 years the Presbyterian Seceding Minister of the Congregation of Kingsmills.

On the 15th Oct. at his residence, Belnacloch, near Augher, aged 74 years, the Rev. Hugh Stoakes. He was upwards of 34 years Minister of the Presbyterian Seceding Congregation of Glenhoy.

On the 5th Nov. at the house of Mr. H. Carmichael, Coltown, near Donaghadee, Mr. Aston, preacher in connexion with the Secession Synod. He had been appointed by the Belfast Presbytery to preach in the vacant congregation of Ballycopeland, in the bounds of which he became ill, and so rapid was the progress of the disease that he expired before his friends, who live near Cookstown, could be informed of his critical situation. Reader, be thou also ready, for thou knowest not what a day or an hour may bring forth.